

ISOLATED HIGH-VOLTAGE LDMOS TRANSISTOR HAVING A SPLIT WELL STRUCTURE

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

[0001] The present invention relates to semiconductor devices, and more particularly to a lateral power MOSFET.

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Description of Prior Art

[0002] The development of single chip processes for integrating power switches with control circuitry is a major trend in the field of power IC development. The LDMOS (lateral double diffusion MOS) process in particular is currently being applied to manufacture monolithic ICs. The LDMOS process involves performing planar diffusion
15 on the surface of a semiconductor substrate to form a main current path oriented in the lateral direction. Since the lateral MOSFET is manufactured using a typical IC process, the control circuit and the lateral power MOSFET can be integrated onto a monolithic power IC. An LDMOS process using a reduced surface electric field (RESURF) technique with a low thickness EPI or N-well can achieve a high voltage with low on-
20 resistance.

[0003] Recently, many LDMOS designs have been proposed for integrating control circuitry with power switches. Among these, high-voltage LDMOS transistors are described in the following prior arts: "High Voltage MOS Transistors" by Klas H. Eklund, U.S. Patent 4,811,075; "Narrow Radius Tips for High Voltage Semiconductor Devices

with Interdigitated Source and Drain Electrodes” by Vladimir Rumennik and Robert W. Busse, U.S. Patent **5,258,636**; and “High Breakdown Voltage Semiconductor Device” by Masaaki Noda, U.S. Patent **6,617,652 B2**.

[0004] High-voltage and low-resistance LDMOS are disclosed in the following patents:

5 “High Voltage MOS Transistor with a Low On-Resistance” by Klas H. Eklind, U.S. Patent **5,313,082**; “MIS Semiconductor Device with Low On Resistance and High Breakdown Voltage” by Gen Tada, Akio Kitamura, Masaru Saito, and Naoto Fujishima, U.S. Patent **6,525,390 B2**; and “High-voltage Transistor with Multi-layer Conductor Region” by Vladimir Rumennik, Donald R. Disney, and Janardhanan S. Ajit, U.S. Patent
10 **6,570,219 B2**.

[0005] One drawback of all of these prior arts is that the electric field maximum of the transistor occurs near the silicon surface. This may cause reliability problems during high-temperature operation. Another drawback of these prior-art transistors is non - isolated source structure. With monolithic designs, non-isolated transistor current could
15 flow around the substrate and generate noise interference in the control circuit.

[0006] To overcome these drawbacks, the present invention proposes a split well structure for spreading the electric field into the body of the transistor. This can substantially improve the reliability of the transistor. Additionally, an isolated transistor structure is proposed to control a transistor current flow.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] The isolated high-voltage LDMOS transistor according to the present invention is manufactured on top of a P-substrate. A first diffusion region and a second diffusion region having N conductivity-type form an N-well disposed in the P-substrate. The first

diffusion region also acts as an extended drain region. A drain diffusion region having N+ conductivity-type forms a drain region disposed in the extended drain region. A third diffusion region having P conductivity-type forms a P-well separately located in the extended drain region.

5 [0008] A source diffusion region having N+ conductivity-type forms a source region. A contact diffusion region having P+ conductivity-type forms a contact region. A fourth diffusion region having P conductivity-type forms an isolated P-well for preventing breakdown. The isolated P-well is located in the second diffusion region in order to enclose the source region and the contact region. A conduction channel is formed through
10 the N-well. The conduction channel connects the source region with the drain region. A polysilicon gate electrode is embedded above the conduction channel to control a transistor current flow.

[0009] The P-well is placed in the extended drain region of the N-well to form a split junction-field in the N-well. The split N-well and P-well deplete the drift region, which
15 shifts the electric field maximum into the area of the N-well. Furthermore, the N-well generated by the second diffusion region produces a low-impedance path for the source region, which restricts the transistor current flow between the drain region and the source region.

[0010] It is to be understood that both the foregoing general descriptions and the
20 following detailed descriptions are exemplary, and are intended to provide further explanation of the invention as claimed. Still further objects and advantages will become apparent from a consideration of the ensuing description and drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] The accompanying drawings are included to provide a further understanding of the invention, and are incorporated in and constitute a part of this specification. The following drawings illustrate embodiments of the invention and, together with the
5 description, serve to explain the principles of the invention.

[0012] FIG. 1 shows a top view of a high-voltage LDMOS transistor according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

[0013] FIG. 2 is a first cross-sectional view of the high-voltage LDMOS transistor showing a split P-well according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

10 [0014] FIG. 3 is a second cross-sectional view of the high-voltage LDMOS transistor showing a split N-well according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

[0015] FIG. 4 is a third cross-sectional view of the high-voltage LDMOS transistor showing the split N-well and P-well according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0016] FIG. 1 is a top view of a LDMOS transistor **100** according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention. The LDMOS transistor **100** according to the present invention consists of a split N-well **30** and a P-well **60**.

20 [0017] The LDMOS transistor **100** further includes a drain electrode **10**, a source electrode **20**, a polysilicon gate electrode **40**, a bonding pad **12** for the drain electrode **10**, a bonding pad **22** for the source electrode **20**, and a bonding pad **42** for the polysilicon gate electrode **40**. The P-well **60** splits the N-well **30**. The N-well **30** is established from the drain electrode **10** to the source electrode **20**.

[0018] FIG. 2 is a first cross-sectional view of the LDMOS transistor **100** according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention. The LDMOS transistor **100** is shown between the source electrode **20** and the drain electrode **10**. The first cross-sectional structure runs along the dotted line W-V in FIG. 1. FIG. 3 is a second cross-sectional view.

5 The second cross-sectional structure runs along the dotted line X-Y in FIG. 1.

[0019] The LDMOS transistor **100** is formed on top of a P-substrate **90**. The N-well **30** is formed by embedding a first diffusion region **33** having N conductivity-type and a second diffusion region **37** having N conductivity-type in the P-substrate **90**. The first diffusion region **33** also acts as an extended drain region **50** in the area of the first diffusion region

10 **33**. A drain diffusion region **53** having N+ conductivity-type forms a drain region **52** in the extended drain region **50**.

[0020] The P-well **60** is formed by a third diffusion region **63** having P conductivity-type. The third diffusion region **63** is separately located in the extended drain region **50**.

[0021] A source diffusion region **55** having N+ conductivity-type form a source region **56**.

15 A contact diffusion region **57** having P+ conductivity-type forms a contact region **58**. A fourth diffusion region **67** having P conductivity-type forms an isolated P-well **65** for preventing breakdown. The isolated P-well **65** is located in the second diffusion region **37** in order to enclose the source region **56** and the contact region **58**.

[0022] A conduction channel is formed through the N-well **30**. The conduction channel

20 connects the source region **56** and the drain region **52**. A thin gate oxide **81** and a thick field oxide **87** are formed on the P-substrate **90**. A polysilicon gate electrode **40** is formed above portions of the gate oxide **81** and the field oxide **87** to control a transistor current flow through the conduction channel. A drain-gap **71** maintains a space between the drain diffusion region **53** and the field oxide **87**. A source-gap **72** maintains a space between the

field oxide **87** and the isolated P-well **65**. Proper placement of the drain-gap **71** and the source-gap **72** can substantially increase the breakdown voltage of the LDMOS transistor **100**.

[0023] A silicon dioxide insulation layer **85** and a silicon dioxide insulation layer **86** cover the polysilicon gate electrode **40**, the field oxide **87**, and a field oxide **88**. A drain metal contact **15** acts as a metal electrode for contacting the drain diffusion region **53**. A source metal contact **25** acts as a metal electrode for contacting the source diffusion region **55** and the contact diffusion region **57**.

[0024] Referring back to FIG. **1** and FIG. **2**, the extended drain region **50** and the drain diffusion region **53** combine to form the drain electrode **10**. The isolated P-well **65**, the source diffusion region **55**, and the contact diffusion region **57** combine to form the source electrode **20**. The bonding pad **12** is connected to the drain metal contact **15**. The bonding pad **22** is connected to the source metal contact **25**. The bonding pad **42** is connected to the polysilicon gate electrode **40**.

[0025] FIG. **4** is a third cross-sectional view of the LDMOS transistor **100**. The third cross-sectional structure runs along the dotted line P-Q in FIG. **1**. The P-well **60** is placed in the extended drain region **50**, so as to form a split junction-field in the N-well **30**. The split N-well **30** and the P-well **60** deplete a drift region, which shifts the electric field maximum into the area of the N-well **30**. When the drift region is fully depleted, the conduction channel is substantially less prone to breakdown. To achieve a high breakdown voltage for the LDMOS transistor **100**, the extended drain region **50** must be fully depleted before breakdown occurs. The split N-well **30** and the P-well **60** enable the extended drain region **50** to be depleted before breakdown occurs even though the doping density of the drift region is high. Additionally, each split junction-field can further

disperse the electric field.

[0026] The depleted region of the LDMOS transistor **100** is increased beyond the area of the conduction channel. The area of the depleted region extends from substantially above the vertical junction of the N-well **30** and the P-well **60** to substantially below the
5 boundary of the N-well **30** and the P-substrate **90**. This allows the drift region to have high doping density and low resistance. To enable the LDMOS transistor **100** to simultaneously have a low resistance and a high breakdown voltage, the width and the doping density of the split N-well **30** and the P-well **60** must be properly selected.

[0027] Furthermore, the N-well **30** generated by the second diffusion region **37** produces
10 a low-impedance path for the source region **56**, which restricts the transistor current flow between the drain region **52** and the source region **56**.

[0028] It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various modifications and variations can be made to the structure of the present invention without departing from the scope or spirit of the invention. In view of the foregoing, it is intended that the present
15 invention cover modifications and variations of this invention provided they fall within the scope of the following claims and their equivalents.